TOWN & COUNTRY CHURCH

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United Effort in Oklahoma

CHARLES R. MURRAY

• A few years ago, this paragraph was found in the OKLAHOMA CITY TIMES:

Again we say that if two churches in a smaller city find it difficult to meet the budget, and are thinking of getting together under one roof with the same pastor, we suggest looking into the example in Tishomingo. The Presbyterian and Christian churches there merged 17 years ago, haven't had the slightest spat since, and are now building an addition for the church school.

Now, a congregation entirely free from jealousy or prejudice is indeed a rarity, particularly when the members are of different denominational backgrounds. But this beautiful Christian spirit has prevailed since the Presbyterian and Disciple congregations of Tishomingo, Oklahoma, began to work and worship together in 1934. Ability and willingness to serve is the deciding factor, not the roll on which a name appears.

When a Disciple or Presbyterian project is accepted, all unite to make it a success. When the Oklahoma City Presbytery was entertained, the chairman of the entertainment committee was a Disciple—and all united to provide the "fish-fry." Presbyterian members fully reciprocated when the convention of the 10th District of Christian churches was held in the church. Since the two rolls have been approximately equal, benevolence giving is divided equally —unless a gift is ear-marked.

Inasmuch as Jesus Christ did not specify any particular form of baptism and various forms are based upon human interpretations, a candidate may choose the form he desires. Whichever form is used, the minister explains the symbolism of that form and gives the Scriptural basis which is generally accepted.

Regularly, each Sunday morning, communion is served according to Disciple custom, Disciple and Presbyterian officials working together with all members partaking of the elements in the spirit of deepest reverence. Quarterly and special observances of the Lord's Supper follow the Presbyterian procedure.

New members are given their choice of the roll upon which their names shall be entered. Those with non-immersionist background invariably choose to be enrolled as Presbyterian and, surprisingly enough, a few with immersionist background have made the same choice.

For more than eight years after February, 1943, the church was without a resident, ordained pastor. Worship services were conducted by students, the local superintendent of schools, or occasional "supplies." The membership dwindled. Some newcomers, finding the church of their choice without a regular pastor, united with other churches. The Sunday school, however, was faithfully maintained, and when a new pastor came, September 1, 1951, he

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Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

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• For the story of a very successful local united church enterprise at Tishomingo, Oklahoma, see Page 1. Charles R. Murray, who contributed this article, is pastor of the parish.

• "The Minister's Role in Family Night Fellowship" appears on Page 3. This article is a sequel to "Family Night in Town and Country Churches," published in the May issue of this journal. Dr. Mark Rich, author of both articles, is a Professor at the Bible College of Missouri, Columbia.

• Another article in the series of articles on American poets who have emphasized rural and religious values is printed on Page 5. Here, Dr. Benson Y. Landis, former editor of this journal, submits "Sandburg: the Lincoln of Our Poets."

• Facts you will want to know about "Your Social Security" are presented on Page 8.

• Dr. Richard O. Comfort, Executive Director of the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, talks about "Ecumenicity at the Grass Roots." See Page 10.

• Vermont farmers are a "Tower of Strength," writes Harry Hamilton—Page 11.

• And read what Hazel Corliss says about "The Family Farm" on Page 13.

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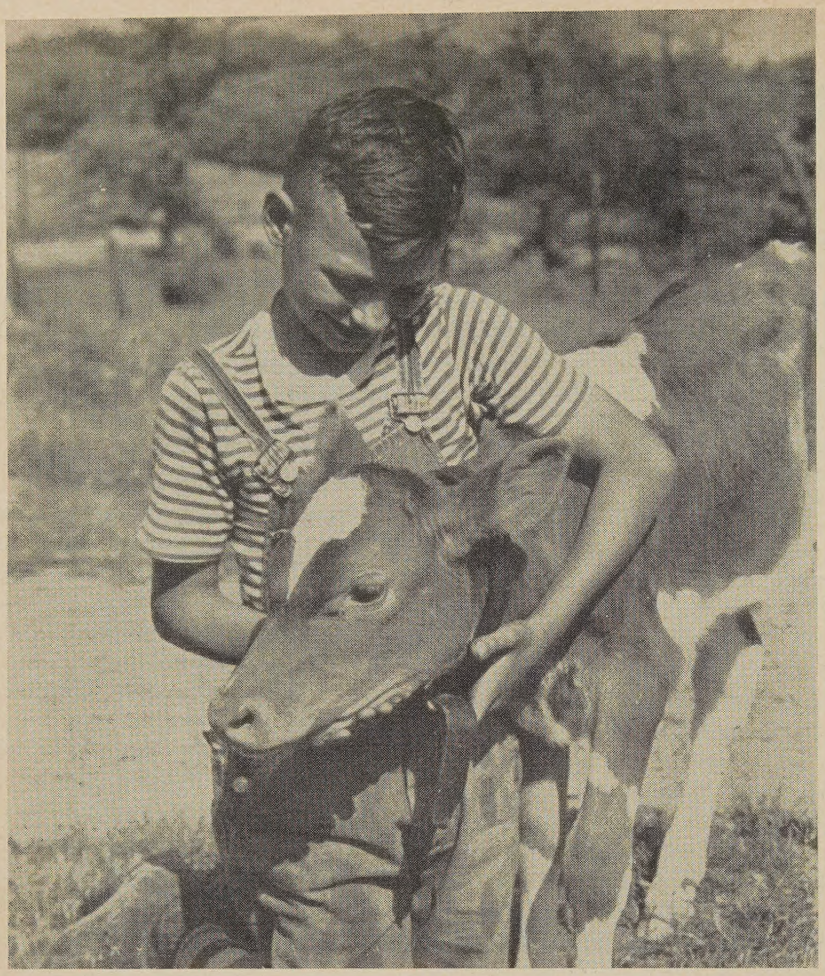

Luoma Photo

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discovered that several were ready to unite on profession of faith. These, and others coming by certificate, formed a row of eleven in response to the invitation given on his second Sunday. With the reestablishment of regular services, growth in membership has continued.

The antiquated and crumbling old manse has been replaced by a lovely, modern one; also, a commodious and adequate addition to the educational building has been erected. The balance of the manse debt is included in the 1956 budget, and that on the educational addition has been reduced by about one-third. The Presbyterian Board of National Missions gave $100 monthly to help the congregation to become reestablished, but that aid ceased two years ago—since then the congregation has been fully self-supporting.

The present pastor, a Presbyterian, has found the Disciples as loyal and cooperative as the Presbyterians. He plans to retire as of January 1, 1957, and the congregation hopes to secure another minister who will enter into the service of the church with the same spirit of peace, love, harmony and devotion that has prevailed among the members during the past twenty-two years. They want another minister who will lead this unique congregation into still larger achievements for the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Change of Address

• Please notify TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH of your change of address. It takes several weeks for this to become effective and we do not want you to miss an issue.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

• O God and Father, who art exalted above our highest thoughts, whose love and goodness no name can express and no tongue can tell; on this Feast . . . we come to Thee once again with the offering of our praise and thanksgiving. We lift up our soul unto thy presence and fervently praise thee for all the happiness wherewith thou crownest our days, and for the joy and gladness with which thou fillest our life.

We have rejoiced throughout these festal days and have praised thee for the bounteous blessings of the earth. They have prompted us to thank thee for this world in which we live, where thy presence shines in every star of heaven and is fragrant in every flower of the field. The earth is full of thy goodness. The rivers as they roll on to the seas, the ocean as it ebbs and flows, the mountains and forests, gardens and harvest fields, the rain and the dew, the wind and the waves, the sun that sheds abroad its life-giving warmth and radiance, the countless myriads of suns and worlds which fill the boundless heaven,—all, all tell of thy greatness and power, declare thy wisdom and bring tidings of thy love.

But on this day we are called upon to thank thee also for the spiritual joys, for the eternal blessings, of which thy revealed truth is the source, and for the happiness it shall yield when it shall be cherished by all the families of the earth. Yea, the day will come when all nations will know that thou art God and none else. . . . Many are the sweet sounds that have vibrated through our soul during the delightful hours we spent in brotherly reunion in thy house. May the sentiments of true religion which our festivals have strengthened in us, attend us henceforth at all times and in all places, that all our life may be spent in thy service; and when the end shall come may we close our earthly career with cheerful trust in thine eternal love. *Amen.*

—From *The Union Prayer-Book for Jewish Worship*
—1895 Edition

The Minister's Role in Family Night Fellowship

MARK RICH

• Churches can and do have Family Nights without the aid of their ministers, but the minister can play a very important role. He can contribute by aiding in the planning of a vital program, by helping with advance preparations, and by his conduct and leadership.

Family Night is planned and carried out by appropriate committees, but the pastor works with them on plans for each meeting. In the long run, the minister is responsible for the program, for he has contact with a wide range of programs and practices and, because he understands the aims of such occasions, he should have versatility in adjusting the programs to achieve these aims. The minister also knows how to encourage and stimulate the committee to exercise its best judgment in perfecting plans.

Advance preparation of details leads to helpful meetings. The minister makes preparation for his duties. If he leads devotions, he is ready. When there is a guest speaker the minister knows his exact name, his title and other information. The guest is notified in advance of the time, place and purpose of the meetings.

The committees have done their work. Participants have been notified. But—is there a pianist? Is the cord for the projector on hand? And how about the screen? Are the slides in order and the pictures previewed? And does a committee understand it is to set the tables?

The minister is like a father to the families of the parish and Family Night is a reunion of a church family. As the people gather, the pastor calls them by name. This is not done in reception-line fashion, but more freely and simply, yet sincerely. A casual, friendly situation is the ideal. People standing or sitting in solemn rows waiting for each late arrival to shake hands does not encourage easy "at-homeness."

The pastor checks with the hostess before announcing the meal. Grace or singing at the table blesses the occasion. Advance preparation makes it more meaningful.

During the meal, the pastor sometimes moves about speaking to some whom he did not greet earlier. This is done naturally and not with obvious display of importance. A city pastor made a practice of eating a light lunch before coming to Family Night in order to use meal time for friendliness. Obviously, this is not the town and country way. But the minister with a curbed appetite can interest himself in families, not only in the consumption of food.

The pastor keeps an eye on the schedule, for the meeting should be leisurely without lagging. Plans for clearing tables and washing dishes should be made in advance and understood. Otherwise, the minister and people may be embarrassed to hear the ladies washing dishes in the not-too-well insulated kitchen while the speaker is making an address—or during prayer.

The pastor often presides at the program. He, having been in conference with the committee, is assured that the preparation is adequate. He sees that the program moves with dispatch and that it closes on time and in good spirit.

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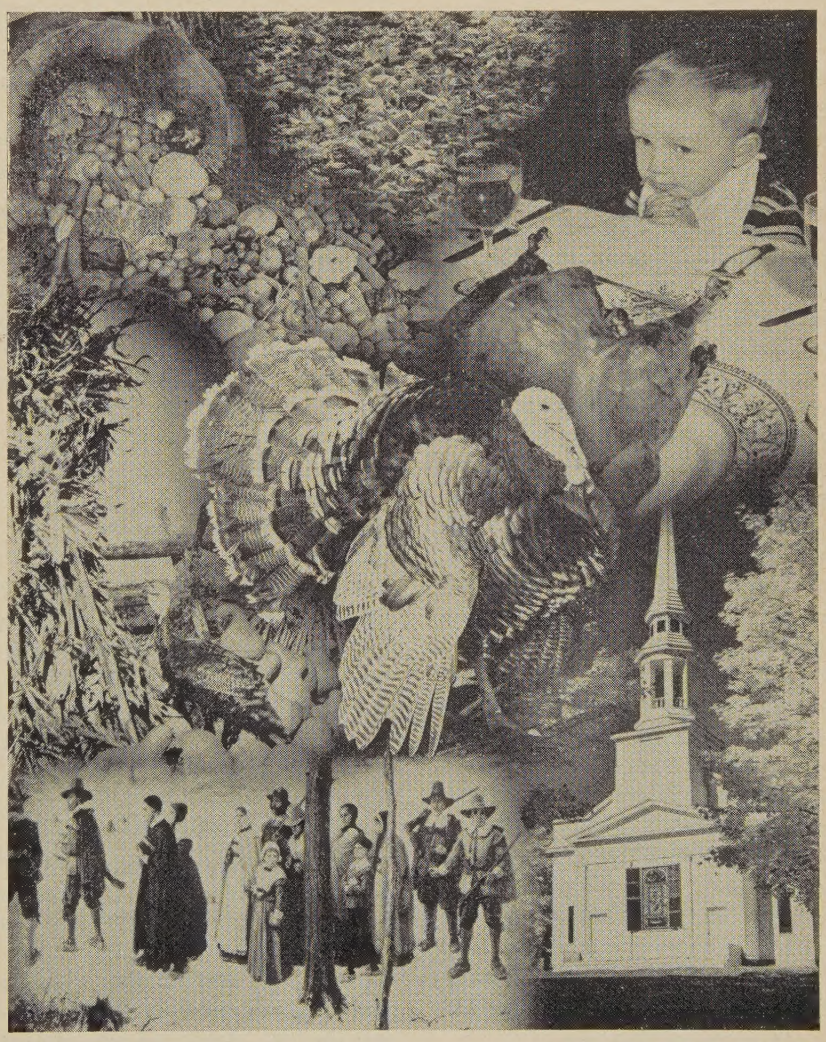

Photo by A. Devaney, N. Y.

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Family Nights can have great value in a church and community.

How it Worked in Two Small Churches

Before six o'clock the women in charge of supper arrangements appeared at the church to set the tables. Soon after six o'clock, the chairman of the church board and his wife appeared with baskets. The wife helped with supper preparations and the chairman, besides carrying in the water, did other needed chores. Families began to arrive—some to help and others to sit and visit.

A few minutes after seven, when about sixty persons had gathered, supper was announced. The visting minister said grace and by invitation headed the cafeteria line. The meal (a typical rural pot luck dinner) provided variety in abundance. Those seated at the tables visited informally. The smaller children had a table on the low platform. Coffee servers moved from table to table, but the other service was "self-help."

The meal went on leisurely and visiting continued while the women cleared the tables. After a time the group gathered about the cleared tables facing the platform. First there was a "hymn sing," conducted by a committee of three women. Next, some of the girls gave piano selections. Then the visiting minister was asked for a word. He spoke briefly and the program ended as simply as it had begun. The committee and volunteers now turned to dish washing and tidying the dining room. Another Family Night was ended.

The second church is without kitchen or dining equipment. The church is weak, congregations are small, but the people do enjoy comradeship. Once a month, after Sunday morning service, the congregation lingers for a church dinner. Dishes which have been carried to the church have been piled neatly on a table in the rear corner of the sanctuary. Someone has brought a "hot plate" to heat coffee in large pots. Jars of water have been carried in.

The people gather for Sunday school and morning worship. After the benediction, the aproned committee members pull a large table into place. Others join in setting the food on the table. Those not busy stand or sit about the church in small groups. Some gather outside when the weather is good. The talk is of crops and farm animals, of Russia or the segregation question, or about riding-horses or tractors. Sometimes someone plays the piano for singing.

Then the call comes for dinner, grace is said, and the people line up with plates in hand. Friendly talk and joking goes on along the slow-moving line until all have been served. Some of the people sit in the pews, others gather around the junior-class tables, and children are likely to use the edge of the pulpit platform. The people move back to the table for food or drink at will and may change places for different parts of the meal. Comradeship is easy.

After dinner, those who brought dishes put them into boxes and baskets and the church cups and kettles are packed for washing in someone's kitchen.

The pastor now takes over. After the singing of a few favorite hymns or songs and possibly a special number, the group may discuss some phase of church work. The establishment of a young adult class was once under consideration. Sometimes a program of music is the order of the day. Or there may be a brief talk on soil conservation or missions or the youth-exchange program by an invited speaker. An educational or religious film is shown occasionally. Usually the meeting ends by 2:30—four and one-half hours after the beginning of Sunday school.

Serving People in the Appalachian Mountains

• History was made in June at Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, when men and women from nine Protestant denominations met to share their convictions concerning the religious needs of the people living in the Appalachian mountain area. It was recognized that much progress had been made during the past twenty years in this area—schools have been improved; good roads now enable people to travel to near-by towns for visiting and shopping; the telephone has connected people with the world; and more recently television has brought the world to the most isolated mountain home.

Despite all the improvements of recent years, however, the health of the mountain people is still below the national average. Young doctors do not want to locate in some of the counties because of inadequate facilities for treating patients. There are fewer doctors in many of the counties than there were several years ago and many of the people are trying to live on food that lacks some of the essential elements.

As the conference analyzed the church life of the area, the school needs, the economic situation and the characteristics of the population, it was decided that the Appalachian area constitutes a large mission field for the Protestant Church. There are many areas where no church program exists and many others where the church maintains only a preaching program.

The conference decided that an interdenominational approach should be made in this work. An Executive Committee was appointed which will implement the findings of the conference and plan for a second meeting. Preparation for this second meeting entails the making of a thorough study of life in the area in order to have some recent and reliable facts upon which to base any future work.

Basing their work on this study, the conference suggested that an aggressive and positive program be launched by the various denominations (working together) to meet the social, economic and spiritual needs of the people who live in this section of the country.

• Build castles in the air; then put solid foundations under them.

—Henry David Thoreau

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Purposes of This Journal

The purposes of this Journal are:

A. To encourage cooperation among rural churches.

B. To improve the administration of the local church, this to include organization of the church, finance, religious education, community relationships, and the training of lay leadership.

C. To stimulate the development of a Christian philosophy of rural life, this to embrace ethical issues in agriculture, social reconstruction, and government programs; and the content of the minister's message.

Part of Larger Program

The Journal is an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program" that will encourage a national "rural church movement."

Sandburg: the Lincoln of our Poets

BENSON Y. LANDIS

• Carl Sandburg is "the Lincoln of our poets," Professor Henry Steele Commager of Columbia University has remarked, in as fine a tribute as I have found to the man who has also been distinguished as a student and interpreter of Abraham Lincoln. Born in the Middle West, and writing first of that region, Sandburg had become by the early 1920's one of the best-known poets in the nation.

He wrote poetry with a vigor and freedom in a style that was not classical. He sang of America, its hog butchers, corn-huskers, the soil, human labor, migrating men. He seemed to be driven by Emerson's advice, that art does not come into its own until it is in touch with the most potent influences in the world. Long ago one of Sandburg's admirers, David Karsner, called this writer "genial, fun-loving, whole-hearted and generous," as well as a "prince of the pen and a master of literary art."

Carl Sandburg was born in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1878. Seems his father's name was Johnson, but there were already several August Johnsons on the payroll of the railroad for which he worked. So as to facilitate the process on pay day, the name was changed to Sandburg. Carl Sandburg was a student at Lombard College, Galesburg, 1898-1902. He was secretary to the mayor of Milwaukee, 1910-12; associate editor of *System Magazine*, 1913; Stockholm correspondent of the Newspaper Enterprise Association, 1918; later an editorial writer for the *Chicago Daily News*.

In 1914, Sandburg came to prominence as a poet when his poem, "Chicago," won the Levinson prize offered by the magazine *Poetry*. The poet early found he was interested in the folk songs. He has said he does not remember when he first wrote them down. Perhaps as a boy he sang them, and recorded them. Then, later when in his poems he dealt with homely and primitive themes, it seemed natural that he should turn to the folk songs. In *Who's Who in America*, Mr. Sandburg lists as one of his vocations, "American folk song recitalist."

In *Midwest Portraits* (Harcourt Brace, 1923), Harry Hansen records an "unforgettable picture"—Carl Sandburg playing his guitar and singing songs of America in the Gothic Mandel Hall of the University of Chicago. It is summer session. The hall seems "almost monastic," the audience in a setting far removed "from the spirit and the atmosphere of the songs." The sturdy poet of the Middlewest with his folk lore seems at first almost an intruder.

Plain Speech of Plain People

He stands erect, and very tall. After he starts singing or speaking people forget his looks and attire and are charmed by his voice. His poems are filled with "the most expressive" of words, which he has received from the wandering workers who harvest the wheat or from all sorts and conditions of men in the windy city. When Sandburg reads one hears the plain speech of the plain people.

Sandburg was born in a city, but in a city on the prairie, which was always very close. He himself testifies: "I was born on the prairie, and the milk of its wheat, the red of its clover, the eyes of its women gave me a song and a slogan." His father worked long hours in a railroad shop. His mother soon bore the marks of toil which was the lot of the low-income families of her day. Sandburg received little formal schooling. He worked at many jobs, and put in long hours for low pay. He drove a milk wagon in Galesburg at age 13.

Taking Greeley's advice, Sandburg went west as a young man. He went the hard way, as freight and baggage. He came into contact with

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harvest hands, and had them and the stars as companions. He was a dishwasher in numerous hotels. Later the experiences and the conversations were transmuted into the poetry that was grouped under such titles as "Cornhuskers" and "Smoke and Steel." The days of the great insecurity for the poet are thus permanently recorded.

Sandburg made his way back to Galesburg, drove a milk wagon again, became a house painter, and enlisted in the army for the Spanish-American War. Apparently he joined the Army to see the West Indies. He saw eight months of service in Puerto Rico. The main result of this service was that he met a home-town boy who told him about Lombard College in Galesburg. The preachment about the value of education led Sandburg to enter the college as a special student.

Unusual Understanding

Sandburg soon developed an unusual understanding of the man in a situation for whom there seemed to be no visible means of improvement. The hopelessness and the depression seemed to be transferred from the people to the poet. The poet understood those who came into contact with the law, and the accidents of the law that brought injustice to boys at play.

Sandburg began to read biography as well as folklore. He had a special appetite for the lore of Scandinavia, whence his ancestors had come. Sandburg's father was a "dark Swede" from the north of Sweden, and the poet often speculated that the "sense of fantasy" from primitive days had descended to him. He was an avid reader of Grimm's fairy tales, and of the stories of the master Dane, Hans Christian Anderson.

The first poems were privately printed in Galesburg, and were dedicated to the toiling mother to whom the poet owed so much. Sandburg had obtained his general direction from famous lines by Kipling, which the British author put into the mouth of one of his characters: "I will be the word of the people, mine will be the bleeding mouth from which the gag is snatched. I will say everything!"

A Free Verse Grouping

Sandburg gives many definitions, or attempt at definition, of poetry, in "Notes for a Preface" in his *Complete Poems* (Harcourt, Brace, New York. 1950). "All around us the imponderable and the unfathomed—at these targets many a poet has shot his bullets of silver and scored a bull's-eye or missed with dull pellets of paper." He notes that William Butler Yeats once quoted his own father: "What can be explained is not poetry."

The *Complete Poems* brought together seven books with over 800 pieces. The first volume was *Chicago Poems* in 1916. This was plainly a free-verse grouping. There were critics who saw a combination of the realism of Walt Whitman and the mysticism of the cold Scandinavian North. Sandburg also frankly presented not only free verse, but current slang in all its nakedness. Sandburg is interpreting a city, but one surely notes that the city is the agricultural capitol. The scenes are often of the packing houses, of the food handlers on whose labor the feeding of cities depended. And Sandburg not only described—he also celebrated. He celebrated the noise, the extremes, the conflict, the smells.

Six years later, during World War I, came *The Cornhuskers,* picturing the great panorama of the fertile farmlands, with all the trials and the aspirations of the people on the lands. There are those who still think that Sandburg was here at his best, combining his sense of the vastness of the land with the spirit of its people; of the coming of the machines brooded over by a restless people; of both the ceaseless activity and the heroism of the people.

Sandburg then gave his attention to American folk songs and put a great variety in *American Song Bag* (1927). The materials were inexhaustible, and Sandburg seemed to deal with them with great delight. He was very sure of the value of the materials. In *The People Yes* (1926) Sandburg goes into the realm of unstinted praise of the folks. It is actually an unrestrained accolade of the common man, in the midst of all the struggle, the waste, and the disorderly in the swift-changing industrial society. After these books came out it still seemed that his highest and most authentic quality and his

Methodist Church in Biloxi, Miss. Luoma Photo

deepest sincerity were in *The Cornhuskers.* In that collection, the first poem was "Prairie":

I am the prairie, mother of men, waiting.

O prairie mother, I am one of your boys.

I have loved the prairie as a man with a heart
shot full of pain over love.

Here I know I will hanker after nothing so much
as one more sunrise or a sky moon of fire
doubled to a river moon of water.

Coming

• The next issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH will contain a report of the second International Conference on the Church and Rural Life, held at the Ecumenical Institute of the World Council of Churches, Chateau de Bossey, near Celigny, Switzerland, August 28-September 4. This conference was attended by twenty-two church leaders from North America, twenty-three from Europe, five from Asia, four from Africa, and one from Australia.

The December issue will also contain a running account of the travel seminar which preceded the Bossey conference, when thirty-one Americans visited rural churches, folk schools and community centers, and talked with ministers and leaders about rural problems in six European countries.

Your Harvest Festival

• Have you overlooked ordering the 1956 Order of Service for a Harvest Festival? If you have, you may still secure copies from your denominational board or from the Department of Town and Country Church, National Council of Churches, 257 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., at the following rates: Single copies, 5 cents each; 100 copies or more, $1.50 for each 100 copies.

William Davidson

• The Rev. William Davidson became Associate Secretary in the Division of Town and Country Work of the Episcopal Church's National Council on August 1, 1956. In this post, he succeeded William V. Dennis, who retired in September of 1955.

Mr. Davidson's background is rural and agricultural. He was born in Miles City, Montana, and grew up on his family's cattle ranch in Eastern Montana. In 1940 he received a B.S. degree in Agricultural Education from Montana State College at Bozeman. After teaching Vocational Agriculture in the high school at Sydney, Montana, Mr. Davidson attended the Berkeley Divinity School in New Haven, Connecticut, from which he received an S.T.B. degree in 1946.

Immediately after his ordination to the priesthood, Mr. Davidson became priest-in-charge of a mission field 106 miles long, passing over two mountain ranges, and covering three Montana counties. After five years in this field, he became rector of St. James' Church, Lewiston, Montana, resigning this post to assume his present one, where he is working closely with the Rev. Clifford L. Samuelson. His office address is 281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

In 1940, Mr. Davidson was one of the ten Episcopal delegates from the U.S.A. who participated in the World Conference of Christian Youth in Amsterdam, Holland.

Rural Ministers Cited

• Eleven Southern clergymen were cited in July as "Rural Ministers of the Year" for their "outstanding work in support of rural church and community life."

The awards have been presented annually since 1940 under the joint sponsorship of the Candler School of Theology at Emory University and *The Progressive Farmer,* an agricultural magazine published at Birmingham, Alabama. Alexander Nunn, the magazine's editor, presented the citations to the clergymen who came from eleven states.

Honored were Dr. James McLeod Carr of Atlanta, Presbyterian; the Rev. George Y. William of Sardis, Alabama, Baptist; the Rev. John T. Barr of Norman, Arkansas, Presbyterian; the Rev. Thomas M. Dews of McIntosh, Florida, Presbyterian; the Rev. Norman Moore of Pineville, Kentucky, Baptist; and the Rev. H. C. Ellis of West, Mississippi, Baptist. Also the Rev. T. F. Evatt of Williamson, South Carolina, Methodist; the Rev. R. B. Pritchett of White Pine, Tennessee, Church of the Brethren; the Rev. James W. Newton of Burnet, Texas, Presbyterian; the Rev. N. Lee Scott of Penhook, Virginia, Methodist; and the Rev. Ward W. Hibbs of Alderson-Broaddus College, Philippi, West Virginia.

Prayer at a Harvest Festival

• Our God, Author of all things, we are today surrounded by the visible evidences of thy handiwork. Thou hast given us a fruitful year. Our fields and gardens have yielded in abundance and our flocks have multiplied. There has been enough for our tables and for the market place.

At all times and in all things, O God, awaken us to know that all things come from thee, that it is by thy hand that we are fed and that everything good we desire is found in thee. Let this day of harvest festival be a remembrance of thy constant and loving care and a reminder that we must love and care for thee. *Amen.*

—MARK RICH

"Your Social Security"

• Old-age and survivors insurance, more generally known simply as social security, is of ever-growing importance to the minister and his congregation. In all probability, nine out of ten of the working members of his flock are in work covered by the social security law; to him the same protection is available on an individual elective basis.

With over 8 million persons in this country now on the beneficiary rolls, there is no doubt that many of the elderly members of his congregation are now recipients of monthly old-age benefit checks. In addition, there must be young widows with father-orphaned children in his parish who are currently benefiting by the survivors insurance provisions in the law.

If his is a rural church, old-age and survivors insurance is comparatively new to the farm people among his parishioners. While employees in commerce and industry have had social security protection for almost a generation, and most self-employed persons have been covered beginning with 1951, farm people in general were first brought under the protection of the law in January 1955.

There is a special need to acquaint them with their rights and obligations under this compulsory program of contributory insurance. At the same time there is a continuing need to inform non-farm peoples of the various aspects of the social security law. Of special importance is the need to inform younger members of a congregation about the family protection that the survivors insurance provisions of this program afford. These are needs to which the informational activities of the Bureau of Old-Age and Survivors Insurance, Social Security Administration are directed; these are informational needs in which every minister is in a privileged position to serve.

The Social Security Administration does not expect a pastor or a leader of a civic, social or industrial group to be thoroughly conversant with the various aspects of the old-age and survivors insurance program. To that end, however, it has prepared and made available comprehensive materials directed to different media which enable a minister or group leader to readily explain the law. The printed materials—booklets, leaflets, etc.—may be obtained at any social security district office. There are 538 such offices located in cities and towns in the Continental U.S.A., Hawaii, Alaska, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands.

To find the address of the social security district office or offices nearest to your parish look in the telephone directory under United States Government, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Social Security Administration, or just ask for the address at the post office. If your parish is in a community remote from a social security office you will want to know the location of the nearest social security contact station. The social security district office or your local post office can tell you where and when you can meet a representative from the district office on one of his regularly scheduled visits to the contact station nearest you.

The printed materials relating to old-age and survivors insurance are various. Everyone should obtain and read "Your Social Security," a comprehensive description of the Federal insurance program. Other publications are directed to the several coverage groups. OASI-25b, and OASI-25d, for instance explain social security to farm people; every minister should have a copy of OASI-1954-10, "Facts for Clergymen." All persons who work for themselves should read OASI-22, "Self-Employment and Social Security."

In your contact with the social security district office or with a field representative from that office, you may want to inquire about the non-printed materials on old-age and survivors insurance available to you and your congregation. For example, you may want to arrange with your local office for the loan of one or more of the Bureau's 16mm motion pictures. "Your Social Security," a 15-minute film, is a comprehensive description of the old-age and survivors insurance program, and presents a visual picture of the part every social security office plays in the community which it serves. "Looking Ahead," a 15-minute production, is a dramatic presentation of the old-age insurance provisions of the law, while "They Need to Know," another quarter-hour production, dramatizes the survivors insurance provisions of social security. The Bureau's most recent sound film is "Social Security and The Farmer." As the title suggests, this film is directed to the Nation's farm people and describes the provisions in the 1954 amendments which extended coverage to self-employed farmers and greatly extended coverage of farm employees.

In addition to the above-described motion pictures the Bureau has made available through district offices briefer films and film spots. While these are designed primarily for showing over television, some are suitable for showing to audience groups and may be used on available projectors, if desired.

Your social security office has available also flip charts, slides, and other visual materials for use in connection with talks and discussions devoted to the social security program. Arrangements can be made for a speaker from that office to address your church group, explain the program, and answer questions posed by individual members of your flock on the application of old-age and survivors insurance to them and their families.

• The feeblest churches are in the most destitute districts. So that without cooperation the greatest burdens often rest on the weakest churches. If now the churches of a county will organize and cooperate to the discharge of their responsibility to the whole county, the work can be so divided as to adapt the burden to the strength of each.

—Josiah Strong, "Two Great Principles," *The New Era*, 1893.

Economic Needs of Older People

• The threat of economic insecurity faced by older people today—one of America's major social problems—must be met with a three-pronged program shared by the individuals themselves, by employers and unions, and by the government, says a Special Committee of the Twentieth Century Fund in a report.

The committee's report is carried as the final chapter of a comprehensive study, "Economic Needs of Older People," by John J. Corson and John W. McConnell, published by the Twentieth Century Fund, 330 West 42nd Street, New York 36, N.Y. (1956. $4.50 a copy.)

While generally approving the federal social security and other programs, the committee feels that the government should also include provisions for income to totally and permanently disabled persons, including those under 65. Rising interest in this problem is highlighted by a difference of opinion among committee members as to how provision of income to disabled persons can best be effected, some favoring reliance on state assistance programs, others favoring a system of contributory insurance.

The committee further urges the government to study the administrative feasibility of a sliding scale of social security payments, so arranged that a person to whom work was offered would always find it profitable to take it. Under present regulations a person often will refuse work in order not to lose his social security benefits.

In addition to measures to insure adequate economic security, the committee believes, older people must be provided with services which will promote their general well-being. It is up to the states, the committee says, to take the lead in developing these services, among which should be:

1. Construction of specially designed housing in which persons with declining physical capacities and limited income may live independently.

2. Public health services, such as visiting nurse care, for persons who can pay the cost as well as those who cannot; and medical and hospital services, at cost or without charge for persons with limited incomes, particularly specialized care for chronic diseases.

3. Homemaking assistance for the aged in their homes, or placement in appropriate foster homes at their own or public expense.

4. Vocational counsel and rehabilitation services that will enable older people to work longer and make maximum use of their capacities.

The major problem, however, is that of providing financial stability for our senior citizens, and it is here that the committee has outlined its program, sharing the responsibility among the individual, industry and government.

At Green Lake, Wis.

• The seventh interdenominational in-service training school for town and country pastors is scheduled for October 30 to November 15, 1956, at Rural Church Center at Green Lake, Wisconsin. It is jointly sponsored by the Center, Wisconsin Council of Churches and the Department of Town and Country of the National Council of Churches.

This year's school offers three major courses, in addition to a Bible course and a course on Church Music. President Roger W. Getz, formerly an agricultural extension missionary in Taunggyi, Burma, and a specialist in farm management and agricultural economics, and now President of Bacone College, will teach a major course on "Agricultural Economics," and will include lectures on the relation of this field to missions.

Dr. Calvin Schnucker, Professor of Rural Church at Dubuque University, and author of "How to Plan the Rural Church Program" will teach a major course on "The Program of the Town and Country Church." A third major course will be taught by the Reverend Edward D. Rapp, field representative of the American Baptist Home Mission Societies in its Department of Cities and a specialist in urban studies and church program-planning surveys. This course will be a study of "The Church in the Rural-Urban Fringe Area," and will discuss the problems of the rural church into whose community are moving large numbers of city people and which is being influenced by the spread of urban society and values.

The School is open to pastors and wives from town and country or "fringe area" churches. Generous scholarship arrangements, provided by the Center, foundation grants and the denominations, enable students to have most of their expenses paid for the sixteen-day school period.

The course on "The Pastor and the Music of the Church" is taught by Mrs. Robert T. Frerichs, and is a major contribution to the study of the town and country church's problems. The Dean of the School, the Reverend Robert T. Frerichs, will teach daily Bible study on "The Parables of Jesus." In addition, craft facilities, musical listening programs and special lectures will make up the program of the school.

The major workshop of the School will be "Radio and Television for the Town and Country Church," and will be taught by Miss Pearl Rosser, Director of Radio and Television for the Federation of Churches of Greater Chicago.

Information regarding the school may be secured from the Wisconsin Council of Churches in Madison, Wisconsin, or from Rural Church Center, Green Lake, Wisconsin.

• The American Christian needs to see that the formal separation of church and state has only imposed upon the church the more difficult and the more imperative task of infusing the Christian life and principles into political society. . . . Work nowhere presses more sorely upon the church than in our own country, and nowhere among us more than in the rural districts, whose springs supply the national stream.

—Samuel W. Dike, "Religious Problems of the Country Town," *Andover Review*, August, 1884.

Ecumenicity at the Grass Roots

RICHARD O. COMFORT

• The Ecumenical Movement has been growing steadily during the past twenty years—on world, national and state levels. The World Council of Churches has grown in stature and strength. The National Council of Churches has discovered more effective ways of coordinating the work of the denominations working through it. The number of state councils has increased and their work is being felt throughout the land. City councils of churches have also been doing an increasingly effective piece of work in guiding the cooperative efforts of denominations and local churches.

But here we have to pause in our story, for during recent years many county councils of churches have become ineffective and others have given up the ghost. It is apparent that local church cooperation, or "Ecumenicity at the Grass Roots," has not kept pace with the total Movement.

Which Method?

There are many forms of local church cooperation—no one method will fit all situations. In one community federation may be the answer to local needs; in another, a mutual exchange of parishes may solve the problems; and in other areas an interdenominational larger parish may be the answer. We have passed the experimental stage in these methods of local church cooperation and know that any one of these methods will work if the people involved want it to work. Mistakes have been made in planning, but experience has taught us that the people who are involved in any change must make the choice and have an active part in all planning.

One of the mistakes that has often been made is for denominational executives—working through the state councils of churches and various departments of the National Council of Churches—to study communities and decide what should be done. Then there has been the problem of deciding who should tell the local pastors and people and to try to persuade them to carry out the wishes of the leaders. Many times the local people have rebelled, for they do not like to be traded as you might trade horses or cars. They love their church and want to be consulted regarding its future. We have learned that in order to have any kind of local church cooperation all persons who are concerned should be present at all discussions. It is too easy to pass the buck in this matter. The laity blame the ministers; the ministers blame the denominational executives; the denominational executives often blame the ministers, the people in the local church and those in the National Council who urge upon them the importance of cooperative thinking and planning at the local level. It becomes as complicated as "The House that Jack Built."

County Studies

A pilot conference was held recently at Fargo, North Dakota, which was sponsored by the Department of Town and Country Church of the National Council of Churches and the North Dakota Inter-Church Council. The purpose of this conference was to study the church situation in the northern half of Cass County, of which Fargo is the county seat. A survey was made of all the churches, with an analysis of their present condition and their history. After the information was tabulated and discussed by a group of persons from the National Council of Churches and the North Dakota Interchurch Council, it seemed evident that there were several places where various kinds of cooperative church programs might help the local churches do a better job of meeting the needs of the people in the area. In one community there were six ministers, but there were several smaller communities nearby which had no resident minister. These churches were being served by one of the six ministers living in the larger community.

In another section of the county it seemed evident that an interdenominational larger parish would answer the needs.

With these possibilities in mind the group met at another small community the next day, where ministers and laymen in the area sat down with those who had already given considerable consideration to the problems. The pastors and laymen representing the churches described the various backgrounds and programs and before long they were discussing ways in which the churches might work together to meet the religious needs of the people. Here are some of the suggestions that were made: "We could have a cooperative leadership training session." "We might coordinate our vacation church school programs." "Maybe some of the ministers should move to the other communities instead of having all six in this one community—this might save time, gas and oil expenses, and enable more communities to have a resident minister." Maybe the Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist and Congregational churches could form an interdenominational larger parish in this area." As we proceeded with the meeting it seemed to be more and more evident that there were at least two areas in which the church life of the northern half of Cass County would be improved if the churches would pool their resources and work together.

After luncheon in the lovely Methodist church in which we had our meeting the group considered more carefully the possibilities of churching the area. Several methods were suggested, but the final decision was left to the churches and the ministers involved. Help will be available from the state and national councils, if desired, and plans will be developed that will be acceptable to all who are working in the process.

Opportunities

Church cooperation is a process. It is an experience which can be full of adventure and challenge. It brings together the resources of churches of

various denominations and coordinates these resources in such a way as to help all of the churches do a better piece of work than would be possible for them to do separately. In many of our depopulated areas churches will find it not only advisable but even necessary to cooperate if they are to survive and continue to maintain a strong and aggressive program.

The basic question that needs to be asked is: "How can we maintain a strong town and country church program?" And the best answer to this question will come to the fore as the laity and ministers of a given area sit down with their denominational leaders to discuss their religious needs. In the process Christians will discover the similarities and differences of their individual denominational programs and emphases. Often they can supplement each other. And if they do not agree, at least they have a better understanding of other points of view.

The time has come for Christians to consider seriously the implications of the Ecumenical Movement for local communities. When this happens on a wide scale it will be discovered that the various councils of churches are supported by strong people who are committed to the proposition that there are many things that can be done better by working together and that there are other things that can only be done by working together.

• It would seem evident that churches die only where they are not needed, and that they spring into being where they are required by changes in population. It is difficult, also, to resist the impression that just as they linger too long where mortality is desirable, so they multiply too easily where sectarian propagandism discovers a chance to repeat its old folly. . . . How much wiser than the sinking of the feeblest to extinction would be the masterly meeting of the situation by a consolidation of organizations while there is a fair measure of strength!

—Wilbert L. Anderson, *The Country Town,* Baker & Taylor Co., 1906.

Tower of Strength in the Green Mountain State

HARRY HAMILTON

• "You just can't do much about the Vermont winter," the Vermont farmer will tell you in summary of his earthly problems. He'll say it with a smile, probably, but he'll be only half joking.

For one thing, farmers need markets, and markets mean people, and it seems that mighty few people want to go live where the winters last six months.

Only 35,000 more people live in Vermont now than half a century ago—377,000 in all, about as many as in Columbus, Ohio. The people, as always, are still outnumbered by their cows. Even the U.S. Army left Vermont. The Cavalry troops at Fort Ethan Allen a few years ago were all sent to Texas where they could move about less stiffly, and the government wouldn't have to pay so much to keep them warm.

The Vermont farmers, though, keep right on farming. A few, it's true, have gone into the booming resort business, and at least one, near Huntington, is trying to make money on some musk oxen he brought from the Arctic. But most of the farmers have stuck to their cows and apples and poultry and have kept whittling away at their problems with the only tool that's ever helped them much—the Vermont Farm Bureau.

Ever since 1912, Vermont farmers have made use of their Farm Bureau —to learn to produce things better and to get favorable legislation on everything from truck registration deadlines to St. Lawrence Seaway power allotments. Under Farm Bureau Presidents E. B. Cornwall, Arthur Packard, and now Keith Wallace, they have developed a self-help program that's the best of its kind anywhere.

It started with the County Farm Bureaus. They were set up as membership groups in 1912-13 to take advantage of the state's educational Extension Service. In 1915 they federated, and thus the Vermont Farm Bureau was born.

Maintaining the Farm Bureau has never been easy, but the first decade was particularly tough. The combination of county funds and Farm Bureau membership funds provided only the shakiest financial footing for the Extension Service. Town support was voluntary. At each town meeting, an article in the warning said: "Shall the town support County Extension Service?" And unless some townsman championed it, the vote was always no.

Consequently, to maintain the County Extension, many of the local Farm Bureaus had to forego their contribution to the state organization. And Cornwall, first president of the Vermont Farm Bureau, spent much of his time just preventing imminent collapse. In 1929, happily, a new state law put the Extension Service on a sounder basis.

Perhaps the first major battle won by farmers through the Farm Bureau was a revision of the state tax laws. Farmers, Cornwall learned in an early study, were carrying most of the burden of government expenses, since most state and local funds came from the general property tax. City people with larger incomes were paying scarcely anything for schools, roads, and police protection. Cornwall got an income tax bill introduced in the 1923 legislature. The bill was killed in every legislature until 1931. The year it passed, it raised a third of a million dollars. Now it raises nearly six million yearly.

Another substantial gain was made in 1928 when the Farm Bureau, under its new president, Arthur Pack-

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(*Continued from Page* 11)

ard, brought Nationwide Insurance (then Farm Bureau Insurance of Columbus, Ohio) into Vermont and offered it among the membership. The insurance rates were lower than the farmers could get elsewhere. Today, as a result, Nationwide insures more Vermont vehicles than any other company.

During the early thirties, Vermont farmers felt the full effects of the big depression. In 1932, the price of milk dropped below one dollar per hundredweight. And that, in a state where 70 percent of farm trade consists of dairy products, meant disaster for everyone.

Although the federal Agricultural Marketing Act of 1933 did much to help, the Farm Bureau had plenty to do. When farmers began to disrupt the local markets by unloading milk at five and six cents a quart, the Farm Bureau drew up a state milk control bill, which was quickly passed. And when the Agricultural Marketing Act was declared unconstitutional in 1935, the Farm Bureau was instrumental in getting it rewritten so that the milk marketing agreements could be reinstated.

The Vermont farmers came to depend on their Farm Bureau—for little things, sometimes, as well as for big ones. "I got a petition from one county," Packard recalls, "when the army mechanized its Cavalry. Farmers said the army was ruining their hay market."

The Vermont Farm Bureau reflects the character of its members. Though sympathetic to cooperatives, for instance, it has never yet organized a real Farm Bureau cooperative. And the main reason, perhaps, is the Vermont farmer himself—a genuine, rugged individualist. He prefers to carry on his own business in his own way, thank you, and if any problems arise, he'll vote on them in the next election. As one Vermonter recently said, "When the legislature's in session, everybody goes to Montpelier—including the Farm Bureau."

The Farm Bureau, in truth, is almost wholly geared to provide farmers with a voice in Montpelier. The most important body in the County Farm Bureau is the three-to-ten-member legislative committee, which constantly studies legislation affecting farmers, and tells the Farm Bureau what the farmers are thinking. The Neighborhood Clubs meeting once a month help to crystallize farmers' opinions, as do the Farm Bureau Women's Committees and the Farm Bureau Young People.

Dean Joseph Carrigan of the State Agricultural College in Burlington and head of the Extension Service, has called the Farm Bureau "a tower of strength in obtaining appropriations not only for the Extension Service but for the other college divisions." The agricultural science building, the dairy science building, home economics building, agricultural engineering building, and the poultry plant—all were built mainly through the efforts of the Farm Bureau. The college now is one of the finest in the East.

Shortly after he became president of the Vermont Farm Bureau two years ago, Keith Wallace bluntly summed up his feelings about the organization. "In one mouthful," he said, "Vermont Farm Bureau's close working relationship with the Extension Service, the promotion of insurance services, work on state and national legislation, and sundry other projects have improved farm income and made Vermont a better place to live."

But some of the biggest challenges still lie ahead.

One is the problem of the "cost-price squeeze." What can the Farm Bureau do when a farmer keeps getting less money for his products and has to pay more for what he buys?

There's increasing pressure in the state to build a thruway to Montreal. The road will take some valley land, but might bring more people into the state. The Neighborhood Clubs have discussed it, and the Farm Bureau has already passed a resolution favoring the thruway.

Labor groups are on the increase, too, in Vermont's manufacturing plants, quarries, and pulp mills. And the Farm Bureau, after recently joining the new Vermont Labor and Farm Council, is now trying to define the common interests of farmers and laborers.

Then there's the challenge of getting full advantage from the St. Lawrence Seaway and Power Project. Among the possibilities of a "Champlain Cutoff," for instance, would be lowered fuel costs. Oil could be brought in tankers from the St. Lawrence River right into Lake Champlain and the heart of Vermont. It could save farmers a lot of money in the winter. Also, St. Lawrence electric power promises to cost only half what Vermonters are paying. Electricity for a small farm now costs at least a dollar a day.

A Vermont farmer, displaying his herd of cows to some visitors last month, was showing special pride in some yearlings he was leaving outdoors all winter. "New Extension idea," he explained. "Haven't had a veterinarian bill yet on any heifer I started outdoors." Then he pointed to one of them standing by a shed. "Know what that heifer's thinking? She's thinking, 'I wonder if them fellers are as warm as I am.' "

It looks as though the problem of Vermont winters is being solved for the cows. Maybe soon now it will be solved for the people, too.

—Reprinted, with permission, from MINUTES, "Magazine of Nationwide Insurance"

• It is easy to say that any young man fit for the ministry ought to be ready to enter the smallest field, that he ought to have the spiritual efficiency to make the small field a large one. I have said this, myself. It is the true thing to say. But if the field is small, not because of the wickedness of sinners, but because of the folly of the saints and the mistakes of the home missionary authorities, the case becomes hopeless. . . . If it turns out that the call for self-sacrifice is not for Christ at all, but for *our church,* we need not wonder if the truest consecration comes to be a forgotten grace, and that the best men cannot be found for the ministry.

—Quoted by WASHINGTON GLADDEN in "The Christian League—A Postcript" in the *Century,* August, 1883.

The Family Farm

• The situation on the family farm today may well be likened to the problems of the "old woman who lived in a shoe and had so many children she didn't know what to do. She spanked them all soundly, and put them to bed without any bread."

The family farmer has so many problems that he doesn't know what to do. The Government's past efforts to solve them have sometimes shown as little sense as did the old woman. Their support programs, designed to bolster the farming economy, have only produced huge surpluses which have been slapped into warehouses already bursting at the seams. The very large and highly mechanized farmers have become relatively well-heeled and self-sufficient. But the family farm is fast being whipped into oblivion without any more "bread" than the children of the nursery rhyme.

The family farmer is like the tough leather of the old shoe, somber and sturdy, needing no rigid, synthetic supports. All he wants is his fair share of the consumer's dollar. He has buckled his belt with efficiency, just as the old woman might have tightened her laces; but he is caught in an unhealthy economic squeeze, and the problem children have just grown bigger!

The family farmer must have a practical knowledge of soils and fertilizer, of caring for live animals, and of the maintenance and operation of machinery. He must also be proficient at keeping records, and be willing to work some 14 hours a day at an average wage of 50 to 75 cents an hour. He is required to work on Sundays and holidays, and in all kinds of weather. He usually has to sell his top-quality strictly fresh produce at wholesale prices; yet he is required to pay retail prices for the things that the consumer manufactures at much higher wages. He could never have contributed very much to the existing surpluses, as he doesn't have the capital, acreage or equipment for such large operations.

If the consumer's income were sharply reduced, so that he could not meet expenses, he would either strike for higher wages or seek extra work in his off hours. Yet, if the family farmer tries to produce more for the same reason, he is accused of greedily creating surpluses. The Department of Agriculture has endorsed the Green Pastures program, but has not provided markets for the bigger and better crops thus grown. Lost is the family farmer's pride of achievement, as he, too, deplores the mounting surpluses.

Many people are so busily critical of the surpluses that they cannot hear the warning squeaking of the "old shoe." They feel that it should be discarded anyhow, and replaced with a huge new one of skillfully crafted construction, like the factory-type farm, with hundreds of cows.

Powerful labor unions and business monopolies help to promote this trend in the name of progress. The human frailty for blaming the other fellow, when we stub our toes, has given them a perfect eyelet through which to lace their own interests. Since the economic conditions have placed the family farmer in a minority group, it has been possible for them to persuade many people that he is a greedy "heel." With their carefully cushioned approach, we do not hear them crushing the very counter of our democracy.

If we want to keep agriculture free and clean, we must step firmly upon the toes of these transgressors. The politicians have already polished their boots and are stepping smartly to the tune of high rigid supports. Let us rise up on our highest heels, and insist that getting our vote depends upon a step-by-step accounting of the farmer-to-consumer dollar. Also let us sensibly demand the continuance of fair flexible supports, supple and pliant, so that the family farmer may get greatly needed help, yet gradually be able to "stand on his own feet."

Most of us own a pair of old shoes that we cannot bear to throw away. They are a bit worn but still sturdy and comfortable. Occasionally they need new soles and heels, but the uppers are still good. They are a good fit, just the right size. We have a special fondness for them because they have carried us over many a mile that has shaped the sinews of our lives.

The family farm is like that, too. Since the first Pilgrim settlers landed, the family farm has been the soul and tough fiber of America. It is just the right size for shaping the characters of our children. It can teach them to meet any storm future. From it, they learn to give an honest day's work for an honest day's pay, a lesson that is badly needed by every processor and distributor of food. This is where the "shoe pinches": the farmer is receiving too little, the consumer is paying too much.

Let us not be so straight-laced that we cannot bend to see our own faults or help tie each other's problem-shoes. Actually, the interests of the farmer and consumer are the same —each is striving to make a living and be happy. We must not be like the old woman in the shoe, merely spanking away our problems. United, we can march swiftly forward to achieve a free and healthy agriculture, upon which we are all depend for our daily bread.

HAZEL B. CORLISS

—Reprinted, with permission, from THE RURAL NEW YORKER, February 18, 1956

I Am Habit

I can either make or break thee;
Through each day I slowly mould thee;
Soon my tightening chains enfold thee;
Then it is with ease I hold thee;
I am Habit!
I can be both good and vile;
I can e'er be worth your while;
Or the cause of your decrial;
I am Habit!
Oft I've proved myself a pleasure;
Proved myself a priceless treasure;
Or a menace past all measure;
I am Habit!
Harmless though I sometimes seem, yet
My strange force is like a magnet;
Like a great and greedy dragnet;
I am Habit!
Though you sometimes fear or doubt me,
No one yet has lived without me;
I am present all about thee;
I am Habit!
Chose me well when you are starting;
Seldom is an easy parting;
I'm a devil or a darling!
I am Habit!

—Aurthor Unknown

Changing Relations of Church to Co-ops

• Co-ops were born among people as preoccupied with religious ideas as they were with economic and political solutions. When the Rochdale Society of Equitable Pioneers opened the first co-op store in England in 1844, most of its twenty-eight members were Unitarian religious dissenters.

The man who laid the ethical, philosophical basis of consumer cooperation less than a generation later was J. T. W. Mitchell, a Congregational Sunday school superintendent. Among the first to see the limits of producer organization, Mitchell also sensed the unique nature of consumer organization.

When Sidney and Beatrice Webb made the first thorough study of consumer cooperation, they relied mainly on their interviews with Mitchell.

A Lutheran parson, H. C. Sonne, helped form the first Danish co-op, and a Lutheran layman in Germany, Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, organized the first credit union. Early American preachers of the social gospel—men like Walter Rauschenbusch—specifically advocated cooperatives.

In the U.S. today, 13 million families own shares in cooperatives. This is three times the number of families who have invested in all the corporations listed on the nation's stock exchanges. Together they own and control credit co-ops, farm supply and farm marketing co-ops, rural electric co-ops, urban food stores, health cooperatives, housing co-ops, co-op insurance firms, funeral associations, telephone co-ops, and other diverse enterprises.

The relation of the churches to co-ops has been a changing one. Twenty years ago during the lingering days of depression, Toyohiko Kagawa toured the U.S. Then the churches were bolder in declaring their interest in co-ops. Church people flocked to hear this Japanese evangelist who spoke of putting the Cross into practice by forming cooperatives.

In more recent years, in many a rural settlement, a Catholic priest or a Protestant preacher has lent helping hands to organize a co-op. Some ministers lost their church jobs because they did so, and co-ops themselves have hired a few of them. Today, the church's relation to co-ops may be briefly summarized along the following lines.

The hundreds of church credit unions, mainly in Catholic parishes, show that this kind of cooperation can succeed on denominational lines. In these co-ops, people educate one another, help each other bear burdens, and learn that the Lord "helps those who help each other."

The Roman Catholic church has a clearer mandate to aid co-ops than Protestant churches have. Not only has the Pope spoken most specifically, but the whole body of Catholic social teaching clearly is more hospitable to cooperatives than more diverse and individualistic Protestantism.

Roman Catholics speak more clearly, they hold bolder meetings, and some of their bishops vigorously and frequently take their stands for co-ops. This is particularly true in the rural Middle West, in the Maritimes, and Quebec.

Church interest in cooperatives is confined to minorities. This holds true for many other issues—housing, Point IV, immigration, etc. Our churches are big institutions with all sorts and conditions of people as members. They don't easily focus on any one issue. Thus cooperative promoters must rely on an occasional pastor and a minority of members.

A ferment of discussion within churches helps co-ops directly. Churches encourage some useful adult education. Young peoples' groups are free to discuss many issues. Overseas mission boards often encourage more co-ops abroad than members of the home church would approve here.

Co-op growth in the Maritimes and its obvious effectiveness have indirectly stimulated much church activity in behalf of cooperatives. Many Roman Catholic priests have learned how to encourage cooperatives by studying at—or simply visiting—St. Francis Xavier University at Antigonish, Nova Scotia.

Protestant ministers in smaller numbers have moved quietly toward Antigonish. So have statesmen. The Antigonish idea of giving adult education a point, a purpose—economic cooperation—has often been called the most significant piece of education on the North American continent. That idea has influenced whole provinces and people of all denominations. —BENSON Y. LANDIS

An Artist Becomes a Conservationist

JACK L. BARRICK

• Miss Elizabeth Whipple, an art teacher at Salem College, West Virginia, first heard of the Salem Watershed protection project at a club meeting. Since then, she has used her talents to promote this project.

When she learned that drawings were needed to illustrate a brochure to tell the public about the watershed project, she volunteered her services. Before long, the cleverly illustrated brochure "Action on Salem Fork" was ready for public distribution. Farm and town dweller alike in the Salem area read the story. They learned of ways to share in the work and cost of the project. After reading the brochure, towns people better understood that only action was needed to bring about a reduction of damages from floods. Farmers could foresee added values through more intensive use of soil and water conservation practices on their land.

Miss Whipple says that one reason she was especially interested in doing the drawings for the brochure was to see if she could develop a technique for drawings that would reproduce well when reduced in size and printed by inexpensive methods. She used scratchboard for all but one of her six drawings.

Miss Whipple believes that drawings are especially useful in soil conservation work. She explained: "They show expected results, slightly idealized. One might have to wait several years before photographs could show the same results. . . . Drawings can't take the place of photos, but can supplement them."

—Reprinted from *Soil Conservation, U.S.D.A.*, June, 1956

BOOK REVIEWS

Soil Conservation. By Sellers G. Archer. University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1956. $3.75.

Most town and country pastors are concerned with stewardship of the soil. If you are, this book will give you needed insight into the technical aspects of soil conservation. If you are not, you should read it and become convinced of the urgency of directing attention to our soil erosion problems.

It is a sourcebook full of practical suggestions. You can depend upon it for ideas to use in your sermons and public appearances where concern for our primary natural resources—the thin layer of topsoil upon which we depend for existence—is an appropriate subject.

The book is divided into eight chapters. Two chapters cover rather adequately the meaning of conservation and over-all aspects of planning for conservation. Three chapters develop special conservation treatment needed on crop land, grass land, and forest land. The two concluding chapters describe special conservation programs and public assistance in conservation available to farmers. Found throughout the volume are well selected picture illustrations, information-loaded figures and useful tables. An excellent bibliography and helpful index add to its usefulness.

Although the volume contains much technical information regarding conservation, it is presented in lay language. It is easy to read and understand. Some repetition occurs, but this will help the reader who is interested chiefly in selected conservation problems. The writer depends heavily upon his wide experience in the Southwest, but numerous illustrations are drawn from other parts of the country. Principles and practices of general application are clearly indicated. Special problems and their solution round out the discussion.

The writer endeavors to create a conviction that conservation is a major national problem, to provide know-how for its solution, to present the over-all framework in which conservation activities take place, and to indicate how technical and financial assistance can be used by the farmer.

The writer makes no endeavor to indicate adjustments that must be made, before conservation can be fully effective, in man's attitude toward God-given resources, in patterns of land ownership and occupancy, in farm leasing arrangements, in agricultural credit and taxation, and in other conditions under which the farmer operates his land. This is needed, but it would be the subject of another volume.

—Marshall Harris

Your Prayers Are Always Answered. By Alexander Lake. Gilbert Press, Inc., New York, 1956. Price

This reviewer approached the pages of *"Your Prayers Are Always Answered"* with some prejudice. The title prepared him for stories of magical responses to preposterous prayers. But this is not that kind of a book.

The author, Alexander Lake, has for forty years been collecting "true answers-to-prayer stories" from all over the world. The book is a collection of twenty-five of these stories, with an average length of about nine pages including a brief preface to each. Each report has been thoroughly authenticated, says the author.

The answers to prayer are reminiscent of Cornwell's *Acres of Diamonds.* The main theme seems to be that prayer will lead a man to see opportunity and to do the right thing. The door of prayer may lead to financial opportunity, to health, or to high and worthy living.

The first story tells of John and June Fernald who on a beautiful vacation day, on impulse, bought a three-acre field on Oregon's southwest coastal strip. Their entire savings were invested in sixty thousand daffodil bulbs which a drenching cloudburst flooded to ruin. The couple turned to prayer which opened their eyes to the possibilities in manufacturing wood impregnated with chemicals for colored Christmas fires. The ferns stimulated to rank growth by unseasonable rains found a ready market. The aging couple finding modest economic security credited it to prayer. Their conviction was that "God reveals his plans for us according to our ability to accept them" and "those seeking God's help in a different endeavor should pray for understanding."

"I Dressed Them and God Healed Them" is the account of a famous surgeon who learned to depend upon prayer as a strong force in healing men's bodies. "Through The Valley of Shadow" tells how a woman afflicted with insanity came back to normal life through professional treatment and prayer. "I know," she said, "that had I taken my original frustrations and anxieties to God in prayer, they'd never have accumulated to that point beyond bearing."

Another built a hole-in-the-wall restaurant into a large and profitable business when he took Christ into partnership. He also helped a judge to make a right decision in a court case.

Occasionally the implications of a story stretches one's credulity a little, but mostly they ring true. They make very interesting reading. For the preacher, many are good sermon illustrations.

A quotation sums up a point of view prevalent in the book, "The urge to pray is itself a prayer. The act of praying brings God into your mind. When God is in your mind, He makes you think true. When you think true, all the gifts of God become yours for the taking."

—Mark Rich

The Farmer Gives Thanks. By Samuel R. Guard. Abingdon Press, New York and Nashville. 1956. $1.00, cloth; 50 cents, paper.

The farmer is a poet, he is an artist, he is a believer—"don't you forget it," writes Samuel Guard in his thoughtful and interesting preface to the texts of fifty-six prayers he has written. Mr. Guard here gives us prayers phrased in language deserving of the adjective "unique."

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He takes the deepest needs of farm people to God in language both reverent and bursting with the symbolism born of rural experience.

He gives prayers for all weeks and seasons and for the great days of the Christian year. These prayers are filled with praise and thanksgiving for all the blessings of life and especially rural life.

"We are shepherds still, and sore afraid. Help us to hear, help us to believe, help us to join the angel chant. . . ." This is but one portion of the prayer at Christmas.

Mr. Guard is editor of a farm paper. He is deeply interested in the rural church. He is an officer of the Kentucky Council of Churches and of the organization of Episcopal laymen of his state. He was formerly on the staff of the American Farm Bureau Federation, and first director of the Sears Roebuck Foundation.

—Benson Y. Landis

Thoreau of Walden. By Henry Beetle Hough. Simon and Schuster, New York. 1956. $4.00.

This is a most satisfying interpretation of the career of the often-studied Henry Thoreau, one of the great men of Concord. It is significant that Mr. Hough calls him "of Walden." The reason is that Thoreau was forever writing about Walden in his journal or was noting "To Walden." Thoreau lived in a cabin at the famous Walden Pond near the village of Concord, Massachusetts, for only a few years, but he wrote a book about his experiences there that has been a notable contribution to world literature.

Mr. Hough gives a lively account of all the facets of the life and work of the versatile man who was poet, pencil-maker, naturalist, social philosopher, etc., etc. Thoreau has fascinated many biographers. Mr. Hough's own insight enables one to sense well and to appreciate the man who is his subject. He also quotes generously from Thoreau.

Mr. Hough notes that Thoreau was always writing to the spirit of man. Possibly it is best to say that Mr. Hough succeeds in interpreting the spirit of the man from Walden.

Mr. Hough left the city to become a noted editor of a country weekly. On Martha's Vineyard he has been a good teacher of all things related to conservation.

—B.Y.L.

• I have a friend who took his little seven-year-old boy fishing with him one day. They put out the trout line and then went up to the cabin. After an hour, they went back down to the river to see if they had caught anything. Sure enough, there were several fish on the line. "I knew there would be, Daddy," said the boy. "How did you know?" asked the father. "Because, I prayed about it," said the child. So they baited the hooks again and put out the line and went back to the cabin for supper. Afterward, they went back to the river; again, there were fish on the line. "I knew it," said the boy. "And how?" asked his father. "I prayed again." So they put the line back out into the river and went to the cabin. Before bedtime, they went down again. This time, there were no fish. "I knew there wouldn't be," said the child. "How did you know?" asked the father. "Because," said the boy, "I didn't pray about it this time." "And why didn't you?" asked his father. "Because," said the boy, "I remembered that we forgot to bait the hooks."

I wonder if many times the apparent failures we have in prayer are not the result of some failure on our part, and not on God's.

—Robert E. Goodrich, Jr.,
in *What's It All About?*
(Fleming H. Revell Co.)

National Grange—Sears Roebuck Community Service Contest

• Old Richmond Grange, of North Carolina, won first national prize of $10,000 in the 1955 Community Service contest by the number and scope of its projects for community betterment. First in importance was the organization, promotion, and "follow-through" for increased rural telephone service for Old Richmond and seven surrounding communities. From ten telephones the area now has nearly 2,000. Grange members drove 30,000 miles to accomplish the project. The Grange also raised $2,500 for a much needed Grange and community building. In 1955, it obtained fire protection for its large county by procuring a Volunteer Fire Department charter from the Secretary of State; buying and equipping a fire truck with all necessary tools. Another important project was extension by 6.45 miles of the rural mail routes from Tobaccoville and Pfafftown postoffices. Its sixty-six members, in addition, completed thirty other projects, with a complete total time of 9,861 hours.

Morning Grange in Spring Hill, Kansas, counts as its most important project, in winning the second prize of $5,000 in the National Grange—Sears Roebuck Community Service contest for 1955, the improvements in its Grange hall. A new kitchen and dining room were added for the benefit of the several groups that use the community center, with 3,000 hours and $2,500 expended. One thousand quarts of food were picked, prepared, and canned by Grange women and divided equally between the Boys Home at Martin City and Mercy Hospital in Kansas City. In addition, Morning Grange with 496 members, completed twenty-three other projects.

Cox's Chapel is the smallest Grange of the three top winners in the National Grange–Sears Roebuck Community Service contest, yet it has accomplished an astonishing total of projects to win third prize of $3,000. Cox's Chapel community has long been separated by lack of a bridge from its railroad station, County seat, schools and stores which are located a short two miles across the river. Residents and school children were forced to travel forty-six miles round trip in order to reach the center and schools. The Grange finally succeeded in having $45,000 appropriated for a bridge to span the river. The Grange is building a Grange Community Center with stage, dressing rooms and completely equipped kitchen. The thirty-nine members of Cox's Chapel Grange have completed thirty-two projects which took 5,115 hours, cost $9,763 in money, with articles valued at over $2,000 given away.